OPTIONAL PRACTICAL TRAINING (OPT) REQUEST INSTRUCTIONS

IMPORTANT: OPT applications will not be accepted by ISSS unless the student has attended an OPT workshop. Register at usfca.edu/isss/workshops.

The process of applying for Optional Practical Training (OPT) employment authorization begins with submitting an OPT request to the International Student and Scholar Services (ISSS) office in University Center 5th Floor. A complete OPT request consists of the following documents:

- Form I-765
- OPT Request Form
- Your current and old I-20 forms (Copies Page 1 & 3)
- Passport (Copy biographical page)
- I-94/Arrival Record (can be obtained at www.cbp.gov/I94)
- Advisor Recommendation Form
- A photocopy of previous EAD card, if applicable

Additional information about these documents is provided below.

After receipt of a complete OPT request, an ISSS staff member will produce a new Form I-20 for you with a request for OPT noted on Page 3. ISSS requires five business days for processing. ISSS will contact you to pick up the new Form I-20 and application documents, which you must then mail to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS). Mailing instructions will be provided to you when you pick-up your new OPT Form I-20.

The ISSS office recommends that you begin your OPT request process at least 3 weeks before you want your application to be received by the USCIS.

Completing the Form I-765

If this is the first time you are applying for OPT at your education level (i.e. bachelor’s, master’s, or doctorate), mark “Permission to accept employment.” If you have previously applied for OPT at your education level, mark “Renewal.”

**Step 2**

Enter your personal information on questions #1 to #9. On #3, put your address where you will be living for at least the next six months to receive your EAD card. Government mail will not be forwarded by the postal service if you move. If you choose to put a friend or family member’s address, write “c/o” and the person’s name before the street address.

**Step 3**

On question #10 enter the 11-digit I-94 number (The I-94 used to be a white card you obtained upon entry into the United States. It was usually stapled to your passport. The I-94 number is also called the Arrival Record.) Now you typically need to print your Arrival Record at [www.cbp.gov/I94](http://www.cbp.gov/I94) to obtain your I-94/Admission Number.

**Step 4**

On question #11 mark whether you have worked on OPT before. Enter the service center to which you applied and the dates you were authorized to work. (If you applied from a California address, enter “California Service Center.”)

**Step 5**

On #12 and #13 enter when and where you last entered the United States.

**Step 6**

On #14 enter “F-1 Student,” unless you last entered the United States on another status.

**Step 7**

On #15 enter that you are an “F-1 Student.”

On #16 enter the code:
- (c) (3) (A) for Pre-Completion OPT
- (c) (3) (B) for Post-Completion OPT
- (c) (3) (C) for 17-month extension for STEM students.

**Step 10**

Sign, date, and enter your telephone number.

### Completing the OPT Request Form

Indicate on this form your requested OPT start and end date* and any previous CPT or OPT authorizations. Sign and date both copies of the form---submit one copy of the form to the ISSS office as part of your OPT request.

*For post-completion OPT: your start date can be as early as 1 day after your program end date, and as late as 59 days after your program end date. Your OPT
end-date depends on how many months of OPT you have used. If you have not used any OPT, your OPT end date can be 1 full year after the start date. For example: If you choose a start date of 5/30/2015, your latest end date will be 5/29/2016.

**Current and Old Form I-20s**

Submit all original I-20 forms that have been issued to you by all U.S. schools you have attended. If you have misplaced any of your previous Form I-20s, you may need to contact the school that issued them to you to request a replacement copy.

Once you submit your current and old I-20 forms to the ISSS office, we will make photocopies of the forms and return the originals to you.

If you cannot locate one or more of your previous I-20s, you should write a letter acknowledging that it is not included in your OPT application. ISSS can provide a sample template letter for you to use as a guide when writing your own.

**Passport**

We will make copies of the biographical page and return it to you.

**Electronic I-94 Record**

You need to retrieve and print your Electronic I-94 Record/Arrival Record at [www.cpb.gov/I94](http://www.cpb.gov/I94)

**Advisor Recommendation Form (see attached sample)**

This form must verify your degree program, area of specialization, and expected date of completion*. Your advisor is also requested to state that, to the best of his/her knowledge, the proposed employment involves training that is directly related to your major field of study. The form should have your academic advisor’s original signature.

*Program completion date for undergraduates = last day of the semester in which degree requirements are fulfilled. For graduates, completion is the day on which all degree requirements are fulfilled, such as filing the thesis or dissertation, or, if no thesis or dissertation is required, the date on which all required academic work, including coursework, final projects, presentations, and/or exams, has been finished.
Previous Employment Authorization Document (EAD) – if applicable

If you have previously received an Employment Authorization Document (EAD) Card, submit a photocopy of the EAD card, or bring the card to the ISSS office and we will make a copy for you.

Next Steps

While your application is being reviewed and processed by an ISSS staff member, please prepare:

1) Two color photographs (refer to the attached handout on photograph specifications)

These should be standard passport-size photographs. You may want to bring a copy of the photograph instructions with you to show the photographer. Ask for a small envelope with your photographs so that when you mail them, they do not get lost or damaged. Write your name and I-94 number lightly with a pen or pencil on the backside of each photograph.

NOTE: You must get new photos. Do not use photos from a previous visa/passport application. Do not take photos yourself with a phone.

2) Processing fee of $380 (check or money order ONLY made payable to the “U.S. Department of Homeland Security”)

Attach payment to the top of your application when mailing to the USCIS. As with any other immigration application fees, this amount is subject to change. Please make sure to check the USCIS web site for the current Form I-765 application filing fee before mailing your payment.

3) Complete Form G-1145 and include on top of OPT application before mailing.

This form is optional but recommended. If you include it with your application you will be emailed when your application is received by USCIS, which means you will have your receipt number for your application sooner and can check the case status online. You can download this form at: http://www.uscis.gov/files/form/g-1145.pdf